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Man and Eolus



CHARLES HAMILTON MUSGROVE



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PAN AND ÆOLUS

POEMS

BY

CHARLES HAMILTON MUSGROVE



JOHN P. MORTON & COMPANY
INCORPORATED

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

PS 3525
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1913

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TO MY FRIEND
MADISON CAWEIN
WITH ADMIRATION AND ESTEEM

For permission to reprint some of the poems in this volume the Author is indebted to *Harper's Weekly*, *Lippincott's*, *The New England Magazine*, *Youth's Companion*, *The Reader*, and other periodicals.

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PAN AND ÆOLUS



A FUGUE OF HELL.

I.

I dreamed a mighty dream. It seemed mine eyes
Sealed for the moment were to things terrene,
And then there came a strange, great wind that blew
From undiscovered lands, and took my soul
And set it on an uttermost peak of Hell
Amid the gloom and fearful silences.
Slowly the darkness paled, and a weird dawn
Broke on my wondering vision, and there grew
Uncanny phosphorescence in the air
Which seemed to throb with some great vital spell
Of mystery and doom. With aching eyes
I gazed, and lo! the dreadful scene evolved,
Black and chaotic, like an awful birth
To Desolation, of a lifeless world!
My soul in agony cried out to God,
When of a sudden all the place grew calm,
Save for the trembling of the mountain peaks
And the low moaning of the billowy winds
Among the abysses. Dull lights here and there
Kindled, like wreckage of a city razed

PAN AND ÆOLUS

By vandals, and the inky sky cupped up
Into a black, impenetrable roof. . . .
But now from out the chaos there arose
Another sound more fearful than the wail
Of tempest, or the quake of mighty hills—
A mortal cry, a human voice in Hell!

II.

The infernal glare grew brighter, and there came
Unto mine ears the sound of many tongues,
Mingling discordant curse with bitter cry
Of lamentation. On the outer marge
Of Hell's domains, set one at each of four
Far sundered corners, four volcanoes grim
Spewed up their flaming bowels into a sea
Of blackness whence no light could issue forth.
Beyond this fierce horizon, farther yet
Than vision's wing could bear my gaze, I knew
Hell's desolate kingdoms stretched their iron wastes,
Hell's burning mountains waved their brands of flame,
Hell's lava rivers plunged in fury down
Their adamantine beds.

The human cry
Deepened,—the stunning babel shrieked and roared
As though some mighty revolution swept
The flying hosts along—some pang too keen
For the immortal and transcendent pains
Of Hell to quench, was burning in their souls.

III.

Slowly mine eyes pierced through the pallid light
That crowned the awful place, and then I saw
That which shall not be seen of mortal eye
Until the final day. I saw the vast
Black concourse of Inferno pouring in
From Hell's four sides, and gathering at the base
Of a stupendous mountain whose great crest
Towered high above the glare, and lost itself
In blackness. Never met such throng before
In Hell or Heaven. Flowing round the mount
Like a huge deluge, from afar they came,
And near. A dreadful sound was on mine ears,
As when the first great call of deep to deep
Broke on the natal silence, or as when
The wailing cry of universal death
Shall shake the pillars of eternity!

Still came the multitudes, and still the sea
Of human souls surged round the iron base
Of that mysterious mountain, while afar
The dim circumference was added to
With newer legions. Conquerors of old,
Armored and visored in resplendent steel,
Galloped on Hell-steeds, that with one great bound
Cleared bottomless cañons; then the kings and queens
Of Babylon, shorn of their lofty state,
Came abject, and with terror in those eyes

That once outshone the world; and after them,
Myriads who reveled at the feast of life,
And when the reeling stupor of their wine
Had loosened, woke and found their souls in Hell.

IV.

What horrid crisis, then, I thought, can bring
The infernal minions to assemble here
Within the shadow of this gloomy peak
That seems to thrust aloft its fearful head
Even to God's footstool? Then as if there came
Answer direct to my soul's questioning,
A great voice lifted from the throng, which seemed
To bear up heaven-high its might of words,
Crying: "Thou wan inheritors of pain,
Angels and princes, ministers of Hell,
Hearken! The day of all great days is come,
Commemorative of that legend old
Whose prophecy is that when the time has run
A million æons out, if God relent,
A symbol shall be set upon the top
Of yonder mount—a blazing star—to tell
That hope is not yet dead. O powers of night,
Children of woe and darkness! not again
Shall Hell know such a gathering as this
Until, if hope be not forever fled,
The day of our redemption shall arrive!"
The voice ceased and a murmur ran through Hell,
A fearful whisper, scarcely breathing, "Hope!"

PAN AND ÆOLUS

Then louder, as when storms begin to blow,
Gusty and fitful, and the word was "Hope!"
Then, rising like a tempest, swelling high
In vast crescendo, swept the human cry,
And all Hell's thunderous gamut answered "*Hope!*"

V.

The shouts ceased, and the exultation died
Slowly into a sort of empty wail,
Half hope and half despair, for still the sign
Had not yet blazed upon their eager eyes.
Then as I sat in wondering agony,
Praying, yet fearing, for the greatest cause
That ever souls of men in balance set
'Gainst everlasting doom, there rose again
The voice of their great leader, Lucifer,
The rebel angel, and outcast of God:
"Lo, hosts of Hell," he cried, "inheritors
Of death diurnal, strangely mingled with
Relentless life, what shall we say to God
Who waits and watches? Shall we pray or curse,
Implore or threaten? Can we move Him thus?
Burn not the lightnings yet in His right hand
With which He struck us to confusion once?
And laughs He not in thunderbolts the same
As once pursued our howling flight to Hell?
Befits it rather, think ye not, my hosts,
That we should send on high in one accord
A mighty threnody—a hymn of Hell,

P A N A N D Æ O L U S

Inspired by pain and sung in bitterest woe,
As our best offering,—and await His word?"

He ceased, and for the moment all was still;
Then plaintive as the rhythmic dawn of stars
Upon a night of sorrow, rose a strain
Of lamentation, such as when the sea
Makes moan unto an earthquake's inward throes.
Then circling outward passed the rising tones
Of that sad minstrelsy, and then again
Backward it swept like a great tidal wave
Of anguish, all Hell's anarchy of grief
Set to a sounding fugue. Grim-throated rose
The awful hymn, and mingling with the wail
Of voices, pealed the cymbals' brassy clang;
The thunderous organs bellowed through the gloom,
And, rocking Hell's foundations, burst a blare
Of stormy trumpets crying: "Woe, woe, woe!"
Methought the angels must have wept to hear,
Methought their tears had dropt like healing rain
Upon the fires of torment, and assuaged
Their blazing wrath, so piteous was the strain.

The music ceased, the echoes sobbed away
Like a tumultuous sorrow, when, behold!
The black veil lifted from the mountain's crest,
And on its glorious summit flamed *the Star!*

HYMN OF THE TOMB BUILDERS.

*They were three old men with hoary hair
And beards of wintry gray,
And they digged a grave in the yellow soil,
And they crooned this song as they plied their toil,
In the fading light of day:*

Hither ye bring your workmen,
Like tools that are broken and bent,
To pay your due to their cunning
After their skill is spent;
Hither ye bring them and lay them,
And go when your prayers are said,
Back where the stress of your living
Makes mock of the peace of your dead.

From the iron-paved roads of traffic,
From the shell-scarred fields of war,
From the lands of earth's burning girdle
To the snows of her uttermost star,
Ye bring in your sons and daughters
From the glare and the din of today,
Giving them back unto silence,
And sealing their lips with clay.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

Some drunk with the wine of carnage,
Some clothed with the shreds of power,
Some stark from the fields of famine,
Some decked for the pleasance bower,
And all with their still clay fingers
To their cold clay bosoms laid
To sleep from æon to æon
At the lowly Sign of the Spade.

Afar through the quickening ages
Fell the first keen notes of strife,
And they held out their hands in the darkness
Toward that blatant boon called life;
And they heard the building of empires,
And the restless trampling of men,
And the dust that was made for heartbreak
Grew poignant even then.

Your bones they are moist with marrow,
And with milk your breasts are full;
Your hands they are strong and subtle,
And your life-blood never dull;
But fail at the sword or the plowshare,
Or fall at the forge or the wheel,
And ye only mar earth's bosom
With a wound that her dust will heal.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

Hither ye bring your workmen,
And it's ever the tale retold
Of the useless tools of the builders,
Battered and broken and old;
Hither ye bring them and lay them,
And go when your prayers are said,
For the blood of your living is dearer
Than the idle dust of your dead.

*They were three old men with hoary hair
And beards of wintry gray,
And they shouldered their spades, for their work was done,
And they left behind at the set of sun
A grave in the yellow clay.*

THE TORNADO.

God let me fall from His hand
One day at His forge when the elemental world
Was shaping. I am but a breath from His great
bellows,
But here among the workshops of mankind
I am a fateful scourge.

I tear red strips from the proud cities of men;
I name my passage the Highway of Instant Death;
I splinter world-old forests with my laugh,
And whirl the ancient snows of Hecla sheer into
Orion's eyes.

I dance on the deep under the big Indian stars,
And wrap the water spout about my sinuous hips
As a dancer winds her girdle. The ocean's horrid
crew,

The octopus, the serpent, and the shark, with the
heart of a coward,

Plunge downward when they hear my feet above on
the sea-floor,

And hide in their slimy coverts. Brave men pray
upon the straining decks

Till comes my mood to end them, and I strew the
racing foam with wreckage.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

I am a breath from God's forge. I remember His
awful workshop,
How the hot globes spun off into infinite darkness, as
system by system,
The universe was wrought; and then I remember the
birth of the sun,
How God cried: "Let there be light!" and, blinding,
bewildering, exulting,
The great orb flamed from His furnace, and only the
Creator stood upright.
In that hour I fell from His hand.

I am a breath from God's forge,
And, being a part of creation, I shall also be a part of
the end.
He has told me that there shall come a day
When the Seventh Angel shall open his last vial of
wrath in the mid-air,
And in that day I shall dance with the thunder, the
lightning, and the earthquake,
And, dancing, hear His voice cry out from Heaven's
temple: "It is done!"

VOICES.

Earthquake.

I am a memory of cosmogony,
That first great hour of travail when the voice
Of God called suns and systems from the void;
I am the dream He dreams of that last day
When mountains by the roots shall be plucked up
And headlong flung into the raging sea!

Hurricane.

I am the breath that fills the organ pipes
When through the vast cathedral of the world
Death's stormy threnody sweeps, wave on wave,
The symbolized note that one day will be blown
By a great angel standing in the sun,
At which the heaven and earth shall pass away!

Fire.

I am the letters of that fateful word
Writ with a flaming sword above the gates
Of Eden when God spelled the doom of man;
I am the wrath that on the judgment day
Shall waste the seas, and wither up the stars,
And roll the heavens together like a scroll!

PAN AND ÆOLUS

God.

I am the earthquake, hurricane and fire!
Through them I speak with man as through the stars,
The dews, the flowers, and every gentler thing;
Some learn my lesson in the paths of peace;
Some con it low at desolation's knee;
Only the fool hath said: "There is no God!"

A SONG FOR THE HILLS.

Here is the freedom men die for,—die for but never
know;

Here is the peace they pray for shrined in eternal
snow;

Down on the plain the city moans with a human cry,
But here there is naught but silence,—peace, and the
wide, wide sky.

Here are the dawn's first footfalls, and the twilight's
last farewell,

The benediction of starlight, and the moon's sweet
canticle;

Here is one spot as God made it, far from the plains-
man's range,

Or the march of the cycling seasons with their ever-
lasting change.

Down on the plain the city moans with a human cry,
And the man-gnomes delve and burrow for gold till
they drop and die;

But here there is naught for conquest and the spoiler
stands at bay,

For God still keeps one playground where He and His
whirlwinds play.

ROMANY.

The city frets in the distance, lass,
The city so grim and gray,
A glare in the sky by night, my lass,
And a blot on the sky by day;
But we are out on the long white road,
And under the wide free sky,
And the song that was born in my heart today
Will sing there till I die.

The long white road and the wide free sky,
And the city far away;
A good-night kiss in the twilight, lass,
And a kiss at the break of day;
For light are the loads we bear, my lass,
By highway and hill and grove,
And the sunlight is all for life, my lass,
And the starlight all for love.

IDOLS.

I.

Mouths have they, but they speak not:
Yet something in the certainty of faith
To their disciples saith:
“Believe on me and vengeance I will wreak not.”
The word that conquers death—
The immutable and boundless gift of grace—
Dwells in that stony face,
And every supplication answereth.
Mouths have they, but they speak not;
Yet one supernal will that shapes to suit
A great decree that can not be belied
Utters from voiceless lips those creeds that guide
The tribes that never heard
The living, saving Word,—
That have their dead gods and are satisfied.

II.

Eyes have they, but they see not:
Yet the pagan builds his shrine,
And keeps his fires divine
Forever bright, nor darkly doubts there be not
Enough of grace and power
Within those eyes that glower

PAN AND ÆOLUS

To read his soul. To him they are not blind,
For some dim, undefined
Reward of faith that thrills his untaught breast
Links up his baser mind
To the clear eyes of God that burn behind
The stony brow. It is a creed professed
Before a deity not quenched in space,
But one to whom his bands
Can lift adoring hands,
And see and touch and worship face to face.

III.

Ears have they, but they hear not:
Yet the heathen kneel and pray,
Nor in their madness say:
"Thou art no god, and therefore I will fear not;
What if I disobey?
Thou art but stone or clay."
They hear not, but their worshippers impute
Them faculties to suit
The divination of the prayers they say;
And Christ, who understands
His children in all lands
When from the dark their dying souls have cried,
Shrines His great heart of love within the clod
The savage calls his god
And all idolatry is deified.

ODE TO THE NEW CENTURY.

The dial has pointed the hour and the hour has
rounded the day,

The day has finished the year that dies with a
century's birth;

Eastward the morning stars sing as they go their way:

“Lo! the Great Mother travaileth, a king is born
to the earth!

King of a hundred years, and king of a million tombs,

Sovereign of infinite joys, keeper of countless tears;

Peace to the throneless dead, hail to the ruler who
comes,

King of a million tombs, and king of a hundred
years!”

Time and his tenant Death, for the space of a mo-
ment's flight

Stand on the bare, black ridge dividing eternities
twain;

One looks back to his realm all waste in the hopeless
night,

One with the eyes of hope sees it rebuilt again.

Behind are the gray, gleaned fields with their worthless
stubble of graves,

Strewn with the thistles of sin, and the trampled
chaff of desire;

PAN AND ÆOLUS

Before are the acres of love, not furrowed by hands
of slaves,

Not sown with sorrow and strife, not wasted with
flood or with fire.

Great is the hour, my Soul, and great is the wonder
to see;

Prophet-like dost thou look to yonder portentous
sky

Where lo! the scroll is unfolding—the scroll of the
great To Be:—

Look to the east, O Soul, and clear and strong be
thine eye!

Look to the west where once waved the cherubic
sword

Over man's Eden lost, and see in the heavens above
Not the angels of wrath bearing God's angry word,
But the angels of Mercy and Peace, the angels of
Hope and of Love.

Great is the hour, O Soul, and great are the voices to
hear—

Voices of choral stars, and the calling of deep unto
deep

Like to the natal hour when rolling sphere upon
sphere

Sprang from the bosom of God and sang of their
limitless sweep!

PAN AND ÆOLUS

Great is the hour, O Soul, and thou art a seer who
looks

Far through the mystic night and seeth the great
unseen,
Truth that to us is blind, and the lies of our prophets'
books,

Heaven and Hell and the land called Life that lies
between.

The region of shapes called Life, with shadows behind
and before—

Shadows voiceless as Death, and dark as the sunless
tomb,—

Shapes whose anguish and strife seem a glimpse of
Hell's grim shore—

Shadows that gave them life and shadows that hail
them home.

Great is the hour, O Soul, and great is the wonder to
see!

Thou art alone with God as he writes on the future's
page

Two words in letters of fire—(one Doom,—one
Mystery,—

Alpha the last, and the first Omega) and names it
an Age.

[December 31, 1900.]

A CLOWN'S PRELUDE.

Behold! I cover up this trail of tears
A moment's weakness left upon my cheek,
And hush my heart a little ere I speak
Lest the false note ring true on other ears;
The music rises and the empty cheers
Proclaim the harlequin, and lo! I stand
The painted fool again and kiss my hand
With jocund air to Folly's worshippers.
So day by day life's bitter bread is earned
With lips that smile and frame the mirthless joke,
And frailer grows the soul that once was strong,—
The joyless soul of one whose trade has turned
Life's tragic mantle to a jester's cloak,
Life's diapason to a jester's song.

A LEGEND OF GOLD.

Lucifer craved one boon of God
After his fall, as his own to hold;
So He gave him a mite in heaven's sight,
But lo! the gift that He gave was—Gold.

And Lucifer wrought with the rugged ore
Till he fashioned it wondrous fair, and then
He set a price on the precious store,
And the price was the blood and tears of men.

Blood and tears! and the price was paid;
Blood was nothing, and tears were free;
And Lucifer smiled at the fools and said:
“Surely your souls should belong to me!”

So he offered the earth with its golden heart,
And the seas with their fleets from pole to pole;
And they looked with lust on the world-wide mart,
And said in their hearts,—“It is worth the soul!”

And kings were they, and they ruled right well;
Gorgeously sped their sovereign day . . .
But Lucifer hath their souls in Hell,
And their gold and their empires—where are they?

THE EAGLE AND THE FLOWER.

The eyrie clung to the shattered cliff
That the glacier's torrent thundered under;
And the unfledged eaglet's lifted eye
Looked out on the world of peak and sky
In silent wonder.

The mountain daisy, dainty white,
That grew by the side of the lofty eyrie,
Saw the young wings beat on the eagle's breast,
And the restless eyes in the fagot-nest
Grow grim and fiery.

The days went by and the wings grew strong,
And the crag-built home was at last deserted;
But, close to the nest that her love had left,
The daisy clung to the rocky cleft,
Half broken-hearted.

The days went by and the wan, white flower
Waited and watched in the autumn weather;
Far down the valley, far up the height,
The forest blazed, and a wizard light
Crowned hill and heather.

And he came at last one eventide,
His breast was pierced and his plumes were gory;
For home is best when we come to die,
And we love the love that our youth puts by,—
And there's my story.

SUNSET IN THE CITY.

Down at the end of the iron lane
I see the sunset's glare,
And the red bars lie across the sky
Like steps of a wondrous stair.

Below, the throng, with unlifted eye,
Sweeps on in its heedless flight
Where the street's black funnel pours its tide
Out into the deepening night.

And no one has stopped to read God's word
On the fiery heavens scrolled
Save an old man dreaming of boyhood's days,
And a boy who would fain be old.

THE ADMIRAL'S RETURN.

(Written on the occasion of the bringing of the body of Admiral John Paul Jones to the United States for reburial.)

Brave ships are these that bear thee home again
From under far-off skies—brave flags that fly
Above the deck whereon thine ashes lie,
Waiting their urn beyond the alien main;
The nations pause to view thy funeral train
As slowly moving up 'twixt sea and sky
It comes with stately pomp, and Liberty
Holds out her hands and calls thy name in vain.
And yet, mayhap, in vision vague and sweet,
Another sight thou seest beyond the boast
Of patriot pride—beside the new-born fleet,
Spectral and strange, no guest for such a host,
Yet making thy home-coming all complete,
The old “Bon Hommé Richard’s” unlaidd ghost.

THE DUNGEONED ANARCHIST.

He crouches, voiceless, in his tomb-like cell,
 Forgot of all things save his jailer's hate
 That turns the daylight from his iron grate
To make his prison more and more a hell;
For him no coming day or hour shall spell
 Deliverance, or bid his soul await
 The hand of Mercy at his dungeon gate:
He would not know even though a kingdom fell!
The black night hides his hand before his eyes,—
 That grim, clenched hand still burning with the
 sting
Of royal blood; he holds it like a prize,
 Waiting the hour when he at last shall fling
The stain in God's face, shrieking as he dies:
 "Behold the unconquered arm that slew a king!"

AT THE PLAY.

The poet painted a woman's soul,
Human, trusting and kind,
And then he drew the soul of a man,
Brutal and base and blind;

And the woman loved in the old, old way,
And the man in the way of men,
And the poet christened their lives "A Play,"
And he sat down to watch it, and then . . .

A woman rose with a bitter laugh,
And her eyes were as dry as stone
As she bowed her head at the poet's stall
And said in a strange, cold tone:

"He paints the best who has dipped his brush
In the heart's own blood, they say;
You took my love and you took my life,
But you gave the world—a play!"

THE DERELICT.

North and south with the fickle tides,
With the wind from east to west,
The death-ship follows her track of doom,
But finds no port or rest.

Day after day the far white sails
Come up and glimmer and die,
And night by night the twinkling lights
Crawl down the distant sky.

Day after day her black hull lifts
And sinks with the swell's long roll,
And the white birds cling to her rotting shrouds
Like prayers of a stricken soul,

But ever the death-ship keeps her track
While the ships of men sail on,
For God is her skipper and helmsman, too,
And knoweth her port alone.

ZOROASTER.

I.

The light of a new day was on his brow,
The faith of a great dawn was on his tongue;
Out of the dark he raised his voice and sung
The high Messiah who should overthrow
The gods that Superstition crowned with might
And set above the world,—the coming Christ
Whose unshed blood should be the holy tryst
'Twixt man and his lost Eden, washing white
From his rebellious soul the serpent's blight.

II.

The fire that on the Magi's altars glowed
Spake to his soul in symbols and expressed
The immortal purity that without rest
Strives with the mortal grossness whose abode
Is in the heart. Their symbol'd fire showed One
Whose spirit on the altar of the world
Burns ceaselessly,—where, if all vice be hurled,
It shall be purged with fire that shall atone,—
Christ's love the flame, man's sin th' alchemic stone.

III.

The light of a new day was on his brow,
The faith of a great dawn was on his tongue;
Above the old Chaldean myths he sung
The message of the peace that men should know
Through God's own Son. Out of the hopeless night
He saw the star of Bethlehem arise,
And o'er the wasted gates of Paradise
Beheld it mount, and heard, to hail its light,
The everlasting groan of hell's despite.

THE NORTH WIND.

I.

Wind of the North, I know your song
Out on the frozen plain,
But here in the city's streets you seem
Only a cry of pain.

II.

I know the note of your lusty throat
Where the black boughs toss and roar,
But here it is part of the old, old cry
Of the hungry, homeless poor.

III.

I know the song that you sing to God,
Joyous and high and wild,
But here where His creatures herd and die,
'Tis the sob of a little child.

WHERE IS GOD?

(Written during the hostilities in the Far East in 1900.)

Hard by the gates of Eden,
Where God first walked with man,
In the light of the new creation,
Ere the race of Cain began,
The world-wide hosts have gathered,
And their swords are drawn to slay:
God was with man in Eden,
But where is God today?

From the ice-bound steppes of the Cossack;
From the home of the fleur-de-lis,
From the vineyards that crown the Rhineland
To the shores of the phosphor sea,
The clans have gathered for battle,
And each for the signal waits,
While a million swords are flaming
At Eden's Eastern gates.

By the sign of the yellow dragon,
By the tri-color's bars of light;
By the double-throated eagle
That screams with the lust of fight,
By the Union Jack of Britannia,
By Columbia's stars and bars,
They pray to the god of battle
For the meed of a hundred wars.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

Hard by the gates of Eden,
Where the passion flower of strife
First bloomed at its blood-red altar
At the price of a brother's life,
The children of Cain are gathered
To plunder and burn and slay:
God was with man in Eden,
But where is God today?

THE STORY OF MOSES.

This is the story of Moses,
The earliest scribe that we keep:
Void was the earth and formless,
And dark was the face of the deep,
Till God's word flashed in lightning,
Beautiful, bountiful, bright,
And night was the name of the darkness,
And day was the name of the light.

This is the story of Moses—
(Doubt it, if ever you can)—
The world was too good to begin with,
So God made Adam, the man;
And for Adam He made the woman,
And He gave them laws to obey;
And, lastly, He sent the serpent
To follow and tempt and betray.

This is the story of Moses—
Eve got a man from the Lord,
And his name was Cain, and another
Called Abel, the evil-starred;
And the brothers quarreled at their worship,
And Abel, the meek, was slain,
And Death shook hands with the slayer,
His first and best friend, Cain.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

This is the story of Moses
Of how our people began,
Of the broken law and the bloodshed—
First fruits of the God-sent man;
This is the story of Moses,
The earliest scribe who writ,
And all the scribes who are writing
Don't vary the tale a whit.

PARTHENOPE TO ULYSSES.

O king! what is the quest that evermore
Foredooms thy feet to roam, yet blinds thine eyes?
Why seek ye still for life's imperfect prize,
Or turn thy weary sail from shore to shore,
When here thou layest aside the ills of yore
To calm thy soul with dreams? Let it suffice—
This heart-sick burden of the worldly-wise—
That ye have borne it and the task is o'er,
Here see the world fade like a spark of fire,
While all thy restless ways grow full of peace,
And wear the fittest crown for them that tire
Their souls with life's unraveled mysteries,—
Above the old red roses of desire
The languid lotus of desire's surcease!

DEATH.

I am the outer gate of life where sit
Faith and Unfaith, those two interpreters
That spell in diverse ways what God has writ
In symbols on the archway of the years.

Backward I swing for many feet to pass;
Some come in stormy haste, some grave and slow,
And all like windy shadows on the grass:
Beyond my pale I know not where they go.

THE LIGHT CELESTIAL.

(Written on the ter-centenary of John Milton, December 9, 1908.)

Immortal singer, in whose glorious brain
 Unearthly melodies were born to make
 A nocturn for the blessed Master's sake,
I see thee pass through heaven's gates again;
I hear thee singing that majestic strain,
 Which soothed the heart affliction could not break,
 And proved the faith no worldly ills could shake;
And then I see thee join God's holy train,
 But, wonder of all wonders! where the light
 Breaks from a thousand suns, the seraphs, shod
With flaming sandals, lead thee; and my sight
 Dims with the vision, till fresh from His rod,
I see thee lift those orbs, once quenched in night,
 And gaze into the steadfast eyes of God!

CUPID TO A SKULL.

I came your way in the years gone by,
In the summers that now are old,
And then there was light in your beaming eye,
And love was living and hopes were high
At the Sign of the Heart of Gold.

I come today and the lights are fled,
And the trail of the mold and rust
Has saddened the hall where the feast was spread,
And love has vanished and youth is dead
At the Sign of the Heart of Dust.

THE PASSING RACE.

I.

Silent as ever, stoic as of old,
The scattered nomads of that dusky race
Whose story shall forever be untold,
Sit mid the ruins of their dwelling place
And watch the white man's empire grow apace.
Passive as one who knows his earthly doom,
And only waits with calm but hopeless face
The while the seasons go with blight and bloom,
So live they day by day beside their nation's tomb.

II.

In the deep woods and by the rolling streams
They made their home, and knew no other clime;
They lived their lives and dreamed barbaric dreams,
Nor heard the menace of relentless Time
As on his thunderous legions swept sublime
Bearing the torch of progress through the night,
Till lo! the primal wastes were all a-chime
With traffic's strange new music, and the might
Of busy hordes that wrought to spread the new-born
light.

III.

They were strange wanderers on life's sad deep,
And paused a moment in God's mystic plan
A little vigil on time's shores to keep,
Then passed forever from the tribes of man.
They heard a voice and a strange face did scan,
And what of conquest or of kingly sway
Had filled their dreams, they gave the white man's
clan,
And with the dawning of a wondrous day,
They spread their sails again and, voiceless, passed
away.

IV.

Silent as ever, stoic as of old,
Their children sit with empty hands to wait
The sequel that the future shall unfold,—
The unwritten "Finis" of remorseless fate.
Vanquished they stand before oblivion's gate,
Knowing that soon the everlasting seal
Of destiny shall all obliterate
Their finished story, which, for woe or weal,
Shall be with Him who writ to hide or to reveal.

KENOTAPHION.

O wanderer! whoever thou mayest be,
I beg of thee to pass in silence here
And leave me with my empty sepulchre
Beside the ceaseless turmoil of the sea;
Pass me as one whom life's old tragedy
Hath made distraught—who now in dreams doth
keep
His cherished dead, unmindful of her sleep
In ocean's bosom locked eternally!
Scorn not the foolish grave that I have made
Beside the deep sea of my soul's unrest,
But let me hope that when the storms are stayed
My phantom ship shall sail from out the west
Bringing the boon for which I long have prayed—
The broken vigil and the ended quest.

THE RED CROSS.

St. George, I learned to love thee in my youth
When of thy deeds I read in deathless song;
And now, when I behold the dragon Wrong
Hard by the castle-gates of Love and Truth,
I feel the world's great need of thee, forsooth,
To strike the heavy blow delayed too long.
Then turning from the mediæval throng,
Where thou wert bravest, yet the first in ruth,
I watch thy votaries by land and sea
Armed with thy sacred sign go forth to fight
Anew the battle of humanity
Beneath the flag of mercy and of right;
No holier band a holier realm e'er trod
Than this—the world's knight-errantry of God!

MIDSUMMER NOON.

Through shimmering skies the big clouds slowly sail;
A faint breeze lingers in the rustling beech;
Atop the withered oak with vagrant speech
The brawling crows call down the sleepy vale;
Unseen the glad cicadas trill their tale
Of deep content in changeless vibrant screech,
And where the old fence rambles out of reach,
The drowsy lizard hugs the shaded rail.
Warm odors from the hayfield wander by,
Afar the homing reaper's noontide tune
Floats on the mellow stillness like a sigh;
One butterfly, ghost of a vanished June,
Soars dimly where in realms of purple sky
Dips the wan crescent of the vapory moon.

THE SNOW MAN.

Poor shape grotesque that careless hands have
wrought!

Frail wistful thing, left gaping at the sun
With empty grin, 'tis well no blood shall run
Within thy frozen veins, no kindling thought
Light up those eyeless sockets wherein naught
But hate could dwell if once they flashed the fire
Of being, or the doom-gift of Desire
Should curse thy life, unbidden and unsought.
Poor snow man with thy tattered hat awry,
And broomstick musket toppling from thy hands,
'Tis well thou hast no language to decry
Thy poor creator or his vain commands;
No tear to shed that thou so soon must die,
No voice to lift in prayer where no god understands!

OUR SISTER OF THE STREETS.

She comes not with the conscious grace
Of gentle, winsome womanhood,
Nor yet, withal, the flaunting face
Of men and women understood,
But rather as a thing apart,
A wind-blown petal of a rose,
A specter with a specter's heart
That cometh once—and goes.

Her eyes some trace of cold, white light
Within their haunted depths still hold,
Though hunger's fever made them bright,
And lack of pity made them cold.
We know her when she passes by,
Whom no one loves or chides or greets—
The woman with the cold, bright eye—
Our sister of the streets.

We know the tawdry arts she tries,
The tint of cheek, the gold of hair,
To mimic nature for the eyes
Of those who scorn her paltry care,
And spurn those charms—if aught abide
Within her beauty's narrowed scope—
Now touched with less a wanton's pride
Than with an outcast's hope.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

We know her in the blatant crowd,
And feel her, as we feel, in fine,
The eyes' remembrance of a cloud,
The lips' faint bitterness of brine;
We know her when she passes by,
Whom no one loves or chides or greets—
The woman with the cold, bright eye—
Our sister of the streets.

THE EARTHWORM AND THE STAR.

An Earthworm once loved a Star. In the hush of the
summer night,
He lay quite close to the ground and gazed on its
golden light;
He looked from his house of clay, and dreamed of
wonderful things,
Till, lo! (as he thought) his longing brought forth
miraculous wings.

The Butterfly soared in the air, straight toward the
beckoning spark;
His wings grew weary and chill, but the Star smiled
through the dark;
His wings grew heavy and cold, the wings that he
dreamed love gave,
And he folded them there in the starlight, and the
dust became his grave.

THE RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX.

From age to age the haggard human train
 Creeps wearily across Time's burning sands
 To look into her face, and lift weak hands
In supplication to the calm disdain
That crowns her stony brow. . . . But all in vain
 The riddle of mortality they try:
 Doom speaks still from her unrelenting eye—
Doom deep as passion, infinite as pain.
From age to age the voice of Love is heard
 Pleading above the tumult of the throng,
But evermore the inexorable word
 Comes like the tragic burden of a song.
"The answer is the same," the stern voice saith:
"Death yesterday, today and still tomorrow—
 Death!"

THE MOTHERS.

Beyond the tumult and the proud acclaim,
Beyond the circle where the glory beats
With withering light upon the mighty seats,
They hear the far-resounding trump of fame;
On other lips they hear the one-loved name
In vaunting or derision, and they weep
To know that they shall never lull to sleep
Those tired heads, crowned with desolating flame.
Beyond the hot arena's baleful glow,
Beyond the towering pomp they dimly see,
They sit and watch the fateful pageants go
Through war's red arch, or up to Calvary,
The First Love still within their hearts impearled—
Mothers of all the masters of the world!

IN THE NIGHT.

The Child.

I hear you weeping, mother, dear,—
I hear you wake and weep;
What brings the tears into your eyes
When you should be asleep?
I hear my name upon your lips;
What is it that you say
Of one who broke a trusting heart,
But now is far away?

The Mother.

I weep for you, my pretty lass,
Frail flower of love unblessed,
Because I can not always hold
You close unto my breast;
I weep that you some day must go
Alone your way to find,
For, oh, you have your mother's eyes,
And men are seldom kind!

FORGIVEN.

I might have met his anger with a smile
For so it was that I had set my heart
To mask deception with a wanton's guile,
And save the tears that now begin to start.

I might have worn my guilty crown of thorn,—
Yea, even worn it gladly like a prize;
But, oh! more bitter than his rage or scorn,
He left me with forgiveness in his eyes.

A WOMAN, AND SOME MEN.

Once in a dream of Babylon
I sat with Lilith and Cain
At the world-old drama, "From God to God,"
In the House of Things Profane;
Trumpets and lights, and the players
Swung to the stage, and then
I saw as I looked in their faces
A woman, and some men.

Men with the eyes of the psalmist,
Men with the hearts of Saul,
Strong with the wine of valor,
But faint with the woman's thrall;
Calm were her eyes as she held them
Charmed to her soulless sway,
For she had the face of the Magdalene,
And the heart of Aholiba.

Wine and kisses and gusty words,
Kisses and wine again,
And her lips and brow were red with stains
From the hairy mouths of men,
Red as the stain on the brow of Cain
That burned with his Maker's hate,
Or the lips of the witch that Adam loved
Ere God revealed his mate.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

Trumpets and lights and the players
Swung from the stage, and then
The curtain fell on the drama
Of a woman and some men;
While cleaving the dome of the temple
Fell the Avenger's rod,
And lo! when I looked again I saw
We were face to face with God.

And Lilith, the witch, dropped down and prayed
That her child a soul might have,
And the blood red stain on the brow of Cain
Be wiped out in the grave;
And this was my dream of Babylon
When I sat with Lilith and Cain
At the world-old drama, "From God to God,"
In the House of Things Profane.

THE NEWLY DEAD.

I.

With the light just quenched in their eyes
They lie in their graves 'neath the skies,
And the fresh clod rests
Heavy upon their breasts.
The white rose dies
Upon the new-made mound, and underneath
The lily shrivels in the shriveling hand.
Pale guests of sovereign Death,
They sought their silent beds at his command,
And it seems
Strange that their life-long dreams
Shall find them no more,—never bid them arise
And go forth with a glory in their eyes.

II.

Still, voiceless, cold,
They lie in their shrouds and hold
The crumbling links that make
A chain for Memory's sake,
Broken, alas! too soon.
Blithe morn and brazen noon
And eve with garb of gray and gold,
Know them no more in the dark ways they take.
They have forgot the sun,
And the fiery worlds that run
About it. Something—(what, let no man say,)—
Begot of mystery is in mystery done:
The rest shall be with them and God away.

THE FIRST BORN.

I.

"He has eyes like the Christ,"
The mother said, and smiled;
"He will be wise and good,
My wondering little child.
God grant him strength to do
Whate'er his tasks may be,
But spare him, if Thou wilt,
O, spare him Calvary!"

II.

Grim where the black bars cast
Their shadows o'er his bed,
He waits to pay the cost
Of blood his hands have shed.
The mother kneels and sobs:
"God, he shall always be,
In spite of Cain's red brand,
A stainless child to me."

THE VOICE OF THE NORTH.

You have builded your ships in the sun-lands,
And launched them with song and wine;
They are boweled with your stanchest engines,
And masted with bravest pine;
You have met in your closet councils,
With your plans and your prayers to God
For a fortunate wind to waft you
Where never a foot has trod.

And now you follow the polar star
To the seat of the old Norse Kings,
Past the death-white halls of Valhalla,
Where the Norn to the tempest sings—
Follow the steady needle
That cleaves to its steady star
To the uttermost realms of Odin
And the warlike thunderer, Thor.

Far through the icy silence,
Where the glacier's teeth hang white,
And even the sun-god Baldur,
Looks down in vague affright,
You flutter like startled spectres,
With a prayer on your lips for the goal—
To stand for one thrilling moment
At the awful, nameless Pole.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

But lo! in that hour shall greet you,
At the end of your perilous path,
A mockery far more bitter
Than the sting of the frost king's wrath,
For this is the meed you shall gather
In the lands no man has trod:
The finger that beckoned you onward
Shall lift and point to God!

1903

PAN AND ÆOLUS

TO C. 33.

(Oscar Wilde.)

I gazed upon thee desolate and heard
Thine anguished cry when fell the iron gin
That all but broke thy soul, yet gave thy word
The strength to ask forgiveness of thy sin.

I saw thee fleeing from the cruel light
Of thine own fame; I saw thee hide thy face
In alien dust to cover up the blight
Upon thy brow that time may yet erase.

I knew thy creed, although thy lips were mute;
I knew the gods thou didst not dare to own;
I knew the Upas poison at the root
Of thy last flower of song, in prison blown.

And out of all thy woe there came to me
This miracle of dogma, like a cry:
“No law but freedom for the vagrant bee—
No love but summer for the butterfly.”

SILENCE.

I am the word that lovers leave unsaid,
The eloquence of ardent lips grown mute,
The mourning mother's heart-cry for her dead,
The flower of faith that grows to unseen fruit.

I am the speech of prophets when their eyes
Behold some splendid vision of the soul;
The song of morning stars, the hills' replies,
The far call of the immaterial pole.

And, since I must be mateless, I shall win
One boon beyond the meed of common clay:
My life shall end where other lives begin,
And live when other lives have passed away.

COLUMBUS' LAST VOYAGE.

(Written on the exhumation and reburial in Spain of the bones of
Christopher Columbus.)

Once more upon the ocean's heaving breast
He lays his head, not like the lover bold
Who in the brave, chivalric days of old
Woored from her lips the secret of the West,
But like a tired man going to his rest,
No hopes to thrill, no yearnings to inspire,
No tasks to burden, and no toil to tire,
No morn to waken to a day of quest.
Again upon the trackless deep,—again
About him as of yore the wild winds play;
Behind him lies the world he gave to men,
Before a grave in old Castile for aye:
Peace, winds and tides! Becalm, thou guardiansky,—
The lordliest dust of earth is passing by!

ATONEMENT.

You were a red rose then, I know,
Red as her wine—yea, redder still,—
Say rather her blood; and ages ago
(You know how destiny hath its will)
I placed you deep in her gorgeous hair,
And left you to wither there.

Wine and blood and a red, red rose,—
Feast and song and a long, long sleep;—
And which of us dreamed at the drama's close
That the forgetful years would keep
Our sin and their vengeance laid away
As a gift to this bitter day?

Now you are white as the mountain snow,
White as the hand that I fold you in,
And none but the angels of God may know
That either has once been stained with sin;
It was blood and wine in the old, old years,
But now it is only tears.

And so at the end of our several ways
We have met once more, and the truth is clear
That our heart's own blood no surer pays
For our sin in the past than atonement here;
But the end has come as God knows best:
Now we shall be at rest.

THE POET SHEPHERD.

Down in the vale the lazy sheep
Are roaming at their will,
But I would be away to weep
Upon the windy hill,

For Summer's song is in my heart,
Her kiss is on my brow,
As here I kneel alone, apart,
To consecrate our vow.

Ah, doubly poor the gift shall be
That links my soul with hers,
For she has given her all to me
While I can give but tears!

OUR DAILY BREAD.

“Give us this day our daily bread!” O prayer
By Jesus taught, thou hast become a cry
For starveling mouths in Famine’s ghastly lair—
A beggar’s plaint when Dives passes by.

We have forsook the Temple of the Soul
To carp with sordid tradesmen face to face;
No more we hear the Sinaian thunders roll,
Or Jesus preaching in the market-place.

The money-changers flaunt their silks and gold;
Within the Temple gates they ply their trade,
Forgetful of the Voice that cried of old:
“A den of thieves my Father’s house is made!”

A MOTHER TO THE SEA.

You are blue, you are blue like the sky,
Cruel and cold and blue,
And I turn from you, voiceless sea,
To a sky that is voiceless, too.

Upward the vast blue arch,
Downward the blue abyss,
With a line of foam where your lips
Meet in a passionless kiss.

But the silence is breaking my heart,
And tears cannot comfort me
With God in His cold blue sky,
And my boy in the cold blue sea.

THE FEAST OF THE PASSIONS.

It wouldn't be fair to Belshazzar
When speaking of madness and mirth,
To draw from his revel a moral
For conscienceless sin in the earth,
For 'tis certain the King of Chaldea
Took note of the hand on the wall,
But here at the Feast of the Passions
We never take heed at all.

The same gods grin at the banquet—
The idols of silver and gold—
While we drink from the cups of the Temple
As they did in the days of old,
But the finger of God is unheeded,
His warning misunderstood,
As "Mene" is written in lightning,
And "Tekel" inscribed in blood.

No lesson of Nebuchadnezzar
Turned out with his swinish kin
Creeps in like a baneful vision
At the Babylonian din;
We have stilled the tongue of our Daniel
Lest sudden he rise and cry:
"Behold! thy kingdom is numbered;
This night shall Belshazzar die!"

PAN AND ÆOLUS

So it wouldn't be just to Belshazzar,
When speaking of madness and mirth,
To hold up his feast as a warning
To conscienceless sin in the earth,
For 'tis certain the King of Chaldea
Took note of the hand on the wall,
But here at the Feast of the Passions
We never take heed at all.

THE HUMAN WORLD.

Here is one picture of the human world:
An unrealed field and Death, the harvester,
Taking his rest beside a gathered sheaf
Of poppy and white lilies. At his side
Passion, with pilfered hour-glass in her hand
Jarring the sluggish sands to haste their flow.

THE VOW FORSWORN.

Unweariedly he watches for the sign,
The sign I promised from the farthest goal,
My lover of a world no longer mine,
My human lover with his human soul.

Unweariedly he waits from day to day,
Nor knows, as I know now, that when we meet,
'Twill be as dewdrop on the hawthorn spray,—
The ultimate of God at last complete.

He still remembers that my eyes were blue,
Still dreams the autumn russet of my hair;
"In God's own time," he said, "I'll come to you;
You will be waiting; I will find you there!"

But now I know that he must never hear
The message that I promised to impart,
For should I breathe the secret in his ear
His soul would hearken—but 'twould break his
heart!

CONFESSION.

As one, a poet of a fairy's train,
Might sit beside a violet's stem and view
Its opening petals, watch the wondrous blue
Thrill through their fibers, and their secret gain
Of how the earth and sky and wind and rain
Had given them life and form and scent and hue,—
So I have gazed into the eyes of you,
Those rare blue eyes, and have not looked in vain;
For they have told me all that I would know,
Even as the violets their secret tell
Unto the wistful spirits of the grove—
Ay, more than this, for, in their tender glow,
I've learned their secret, found their winsome spell,
The sweet and simple message of their love.

LOVE AND ART.

I.

Eagle-heart, child-heart, bonnie lad o' dreams,
Far away thy soul hears passion-throated Art
 Singing where the future lies
 Wrapped in hues of Paradise,
 Pleading with her poignant note
 That forever seems to float
Farther down the vista that is calling to thy heart.
 Hearken! From the heights
 Where thy soul alights
Bend thine ear to listen for the lute of Love is sighing:
 "Eagle-heart, child-heart,
 Love is love, and art is art;
 Answer while thy lips are red;
 Wilt thou have a barren bed?
 Choose between us which to wed:
Answer, for thy bride awaits, and fragile hours are
 flying!"

II.

Eagle-heart, child-heart, bonnie lad o' dreams,
Far away thy soul hears Love's enraptured strain,
 Calling with her plaintive note,
 Pleading lute and pensive oat,
Burning, yearning, ever turning back to one refrain:
 "Choose between us which to wed;
 Love is love, and art is art;

Wilt thou have a barren bed?
Joyless mate and bloodless heart?
She will bring thee for her dower
Shrunk limb and shriveled breast,
Bitter thralldom, bootless power,
Days and nights of endless quest,
She will take thee heart and brain,
Hold thee with a vampire charm,
Kiss thee cold in every vein,
Drink thy blood to make her warm!"

III.

Eagle-heart, child-heart, bonnie lad o' dreams,
Far away thy soul hears passion-throated Art
Singing from her peaks of snow,
Wrapped in pale, unearthly glow,
Pleading with her poignant note
That forever seems to float
Farther down the vista that is calling to thy heart.
Hearken! From the heights
Where thy soul alights
Lift thy head to listen for the voice of Art is calling:
"Eagle-heart, child-heart,
Love is love, and art is art,
Answer while thy soul is strong;
Love is brief, but art is long;
Love is sighs, but art is song;
Answer, for thy bride awaits, and moonless night
is falling!"

THE SONG OF THE DYNAMO.

*I have been kissed by the Priestess of the Thin and
Deadly Blood—*

*With the kiss that men call Lightning, and yet I did not
die,*

*For the kiss was a message from God; I felt it and
understood,*

*And I knew how He looked on the cosmic light and
called it "Good";*

I thrilled with a vibrant joy; I hummed with ecstasy.

Men hear me sing but they know not the source of my
song;

I hold them enthralled with my mysterious eyes;

They quiver when I purr with the voice of a wanton
woman;

They touch me and fall dead.

I am a dream of the Creator made visible;

My voice is an echo of the Voice that taught

The morning stars their choral hymn;

The force that binds me to the marts of men

Is the force that holds the planets in a leash while God

Drives them in glittering galaxy around the sun.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

Here I am a weakling's symbol of a power
That spins the luminous girdle of Saturn in sure hands,
And frames the awful face of God in the shifting
boreal light.

My soul is destiny and immortality;
It flashes in the eyes of the tempest, glows along
The phosphorescent billows where the hand of the
Almighty

Is laid for a moment on the breast of the sea,
And the sea smiles;

My soul is the wingless word
That flies from zone to zone and speaks suddenly out
of the void.

In the years that are to be
I shall soar like an evil bird over the warring camps
of men,

And spew destroying poison.

I shall be the sinew of a strange wing,—

A wing that shall bear men into the forge of the
thunder and the lightning.

But when I fail the groundlings shall look up
And see their brothers through the ether plunge,
Stricken, a haggard rout of flame-flotillas of the sun!

PAN AND ÆOLUS

In the years that are to come
I shall be a servant in the house of men;
I shall breathe unutterable music on the spindle and
the loom;
I shall sing, exultant, with the choristers of dreams
fulfilled,
And light shall be bound like sandals on my feet.

*I have been kissed by the Priestess of the Thin and
Deadly Blood—
With the kiss that men call Lightning, and yet I did
not die,
For the kiss was a message from God; I felt it and
understood,
And I knew how He looked on the cosmic light and
called it "Good";
I thrilled with a vibrant joy; I hummed with ecstasy.*

THE GOLD FIELDS.

Here is a tale the North Wind sang to me:
Hell hath set Mammon o'er a frozen land,
Crowned him with gold, put gold into his hand,
And men forsake their God to bow the knee
Again unto this world-old deity
Whose rule is wheresoe'er man's feet go forth,
Whether they track the grim and icy North,
Or Afric's scorching sweeps of sandy sea.
About his throne they crawl and curse and weep;
The tenfold pangs of darkness and of cold
Bite at their hearts, and hound them as they creep,
Thief-like, to catch his scattered crumbs of gold;—
And over all still burns God's warning scroll:
"What profit it if ye shall lose your soul?"

THE WOMAN ANSWERS.

What will I say when face to face with God
My naked soul shall come, seared with the stain
That men call sin? Why, God will understand;
He knew my pitiful story long before
My frail dust quickened with the breath of life;
He knew the mystery of that day of days
When, thrilled with virgin wonder, I should come
Bearing the lily of my stainless love
To plant upon the desert of desire.
I do not fear His judgment; He knows all.

I do not fear His judgment lest it be
That I shall look no more upon his face
Who taught my heart to love; and, surely, One
Who wrought a perfect note from these poor strings
Will not condemn to discord when the strain
Has reached the fullness of its harmony.

I do not fear His judgment, but I weep
For him who slew the lily with a kiss
Too full of passion's rapture; if I speak
In that transcendent moment when I stand
A sinful woman at the bar of God
To hear my sentence, I shall answer still:
"I loved him; that was all that I could do;
I love him; that is all that I can say!"

THE MONASTERY.

Beyond the wall the passion flower is blooming,
Strange hints of life along the winds are blown;
Within, the cowed and silent men are kneeling

Before an image on a cross of stone,
And on their lifted faces, wan as death,
I read this simple message of their faith:

“The trail of flame is ashen,
And pleasure’s lees are gray,
And gray the fruit of passion
Whose ripeness is decay;
The stress of life is rancor,
A madness born to slay;
They only miss its canker
Who live with God and pray.”

Beyond the wall lies Babylon, the mighty;
Faint echoes of her songs come drifting by;
Within there is a hymn of consecration,
A psalm that lifts the fervent soul on high;
And yet, sometimes, where bows the hooded choir,
There comes the old call of the World’s Desire:

“The rose’s dust is ashen
Be petals white or red,
And vain the sighs of passion
When summer’s light is fled;
The garden’s fruitful measure
Is crowned with bloom today;
They only miss its treasure
Who turn their hearts away.”

THE PASSION PLAY.

I.

Where falls the shadow of the Kofel cross
Athwart the Alpine snows, the rose of faith
Is blooming still in consecrated hearts,
And holy men another cross have hewn
Whereon the symbol'd Christ again shall die
To cleanse the world of sin. Within the vale
Where flows the Ammer like a trail of tears
Upon the Holy Mother's face, I see
The men and women, faithful to their vows,
Breathing the passion of Gethsemane.
I see the Saviour in Jerusalem;
I see the godless traders scourged; I see
Their wares strewn on the temple floor, their doves
Set free to wander on the roving winds;
I see Iscariot kiss the Nazarene;
I see the hate of Herod, and I hear
The multitude half-sob, half-wail, "The Cross!"
Then up the Way of Tears to Golgotha,
Crowned with the thorn, and then, last bitter scene,
The mortal death of God's immortal Son.

II.

The eagle wheels around the Kofel crags;
The chamois leaps the tumbling glacier stream;

PAN AND ÆOLUS

The sunbeams dance upon the glistening snows
Like pixies, and the wooded mountain slopes
Thrill with the notes of songbirds; hymns of joy
Break from the forests and the smiling plains,
And where the Ammer winds its silvery way,
The wild swan ever follows like a prayer.
Who of God's creatures, then, has lost his way?
Tis not the chamois, eagle or the swan;
Tis not the mountain torrent, or the birds
That twitter all day long within the wood;
Tis not the Ammer flowing to the sea.
Who of God's creatures, then, has lost his way?
Let us go in the Coliseum where
The fresh-hewn cross is lifted to the sky;
Let us gaze on the reverential throng
That marks Christ's passion in a silent awe,
And think a moment on the world of Man—
Man, made in God's own image, yet the one
Of all God's creatures who has lost his way.

III.

When, on the brooding darkness of the void
Wherein the world swung like a tiny star,
Death hovered with his sable wings outspread,
And Hell yawned far below, God gave to man
His promise of redemption through the blood
That dripped from pierced hands high on Calvary—
The mortal death of God's immortal Son.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

The centuries have crumbled into dust;
Cities have risen on the shores of Time,
Then passed away like footprints in the sand;
Empires have vanished, kings have laid them down
In silence, but the word of Him remains
Who cried in agony upon the tree:
"Forgive them, for they know not what they do."
Once more the fresh-hewn cross lifts to the sky
In consecrated Oberammergau;
Once more I see the Christ in humble guise
Teaching the multitudes, and hear his voice
In supplication and in parable
Proclaim his mission to a sinful world.
Ah, could the world but gaze upon that Christ
With heart attuned unto the symbolized love
That makes his face a radiant miracle!
The world hath need of thy great lesson now;
The money-changers throng the Temple gates;
The kiss of Judas burns from lips to brow;
The hate of Herod rankles in the hearts
Of scorners, and the poisoned crown of thorns
Which Greed has woven for humanity,
Bites like the chaplet that the Saviour wore
The day that He was crowned and crucified.
Methinks I see around the shining cross
Phantoms that shudder when the name of Christ
Is whispered by the multitude; I see
Grim Avarice with shriveled fingers clutch
A golden bauble; shrinking by his side,
Oppression stands and hugs a clanking chain,

PAN AND ÆOLUS

While deeper in the gloom, with eyes aglow
And matted hair still dripping red with gore,
Sits War, her trembling hand enclasped within
The spectral hand of Death. O Christus, thou
To whom it has been given once again
To symbolize the passion of the cross,
Approach thy task with heart inspired by love,
And when the Saviour's words fall from thy lips,
Be thine the Saviour's exaltation when
He told the dying thief upon the cross
That he should be with Him in Paradise.

INSTRUMENTS.

Today we are the fruits of yesterday
And what tomorrow shall of us demand,—
The helpless tools within the Master's hand
To do His will and never say Him nay.
He blends our souls with iron, fire or clay,
He shapes our doom according as He planned
The scheme of life, and who shall understand
The why He gives, or why He takes away?
Somewhere the universal loom shall catch
These broken, flying threads like thee and me,
And twined with other broken threads to match
As fly the years' swift shuttles ceaselessly,
So weave them all together one by one,
Till lo! the finished woof is brighter than the sun.

QUATRAINS.

The Sky Line.

Like black fangs in a cruel ogre's jaw
The grim piles lift against the sunset sky;
Down drops the night, and shuts the horrid maw—
I listen, breathless, but there comes no cry.

Defeat.

He sits and looks into the west
Where twilight gathers, wan and gray,
A knight who quit the Golden Quest,
And flung Excalibur away.

To an Amazon.

O! twain in spirit, we shall know
Thy like no more, so fierce, so mild,
One breast shorn clean to rest the bow,
One milk-full for thy warrior child.

The Old Mother.

Life is like an old mother whom trouble and toil
Have sufficed the best part of her nature to spoil,
Whom her children, the Passions, so worry and vex
That the good are forgot while the evil perplex.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

The Call.

When the north wind, riding o'er the uplands,
Shouted to the red leaves: "I am Death!"
Was it fear that sent them all a-flying,
Sighing, flying o'er the withered heath?

Life.

Life is just a web of doubt
Where, with iridescent gleams,
Flickers in or struggles out
Love, the golden moth of dreams.

Revelation.

I called your name, Man-in-the-Grave,
And straight her lips grew cold on mine,
And then I knew although I have
Her hand, her heart and soul are thine.

Tears of Men.

Men shed their blood for honor or renown,
For freedom's sake to nameless graves go down,
But there's one cause alone 'neath heaven above
For which they shed their tears, and that is—Love.

IMMUTABILITY.

The sun must rise, the sun must set,
Nor ever change in plan may be,
Though dawn to stricken wretch may bring
The hempen rope and gallows tree,
And eventide to happy bride
Love's crown of love in Arcady.

THE FETTERED VULTURES.

(Battleships of the Coronation Naval Review, Spithead, England, June 24, 1911.)

Hail, sceptered Mars, great god of wars!
Hail, Carnage, queen of blood!
And hail those muffled armaments—
Thy fettered vulture brood!
Their sable wings are laureled and
Their necks are ribboned gay,
And silken folds their talons hide
This kingly holiday.

Grotesque and grim, in chains of gold,
They go with solemn mien,
Their horrid plumes bedizened for
The eyes of king and queen;
But padded claw and mummer's crest
Have served not to disguise
Those iron beaks that thirst for blood,
Those wakeful, wolfish eyes.

Ten condors with unsated maws,
Four lesser birds of prey,
An eagle with undaunted eye
From Shasta, far away;
A score of birds from many seas,
All purged of grime and blood,
Keep truckling pace the fete to grace,—
Mars' fettered vulture brood.

PAN AND ÆOLUS

But see ye not, great god of wars,
And ye, Britannia's king,
The day when these black birds shall fly
On fierce unshackled wing?
When they shall meet 'twixt sea and sky,
Rend flesh and break the bone,
And blood shall trickle through the waves
To gray old Triton's throne?

Hail, sceptered Mars, great god of wars!
Hail, Carnage, queen of blood!
And hail those muffled armaments,—
Thy fettered vulture brood!
And yet Christ's gentle teaching scrolls
Prophetic on the sky:
"Behold! some day thy vulture brood
Shall go unfed and die!"

THE DEAD CHILD.

Life to her was a perfect flower,
And every petal a jeweled hour,
Till all at once—we know not why—
God sent a frost from His clear blue sky.

Life to her was a fairy rune;
Her light feet tripped to the lilting tune,
Till all at once—we know not why—
God stopped th' enchanting melody.

Life to her was a picture book
That her glad eyes searched with eager look
Till all at once—we know not why—
God put the wondrous volume by.

NIGHT IN MAY.

The snowy clouds, soft sleeping lambkins, lie
Along the dark blue meadows of the sky,
And the bright stars, like golden daffodils,
Are blooming thickly by.

And Luna, gentle shepherdess, the while
Keeps near her flock and guards it with her smile;
I almost fancy I can hear her song
Down to this shadowed stile.

Lo! Zephyrus, fond lover, comes to woo;
With airy step he hastes the pastures through,
And steals a kiss from Luna as she nods
Drowsy with fragrant dew.

She starts; the little lambs aroused from sleep,
Fly hence; but Luna near her swain doth keep.
Oh, it was ever thus since lover came
'Twixt shepherdess and sheep!

DE PROFUNDIS.

I thought today within the crowded mart
I saw thee for a moment, friend of mine,
And all at once my blood leapt fast and fine
And a new light broke on my shadowed heart.
'T was but a moment that my fancy's art
Moulded another's features into thine,
For when he passed me by and gave no sign,
The bitter truth came back with sudden start.
Then I remembered how the Merlin spell
Of waving arms and woven paces bands
Thy dust forever in its four-walled cell,
Heedless of all except thy Seer's commands—
Holds thee enraptured with the charms that dwell
In broken paces and in folded hands.

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